1. (Currently amended) A system for automatically switching to an interactive application during a commercial break in video programming comprising: an interactive application module capable of executing an interactive application program and generating output data; a video program module that generates a video program signal; an input module for entering user input commands into the interactive application module; a break detection module adapted to detect a commercial break in the video program signal and generate a break beginning signal; a display module having a primary display area capable of receiving the video program signal and the interactive application output data and displaying a primary display image corresponding to either the video program signal or the interactive application output data; and a switching module that switches the primary display image to the interactive application output data upon receiving the break beginning signal so that upon detecting the beginning of a commercial break, the interactive application output data is automatically presented in the primary display area, wherein

upon the activation of a second interactive application, said system automatically saves a user's progress in the operation of said interactive program in a memory as to allow the user to use a second interactive application, and

restoring said user's progress of said interactive program by accessing said memory to retrieve information corresponding to said user's progress

automatically switching back to the display of said video program at the end of said commercial break unless said user enables an override command at the time of said switching operation as to continue the operation of said interactive application until said interactive application is terminated

at the time said interactive application is terminated, said system automatically saves said user's progress in the operation of said interactive application as to resume the display of said video program in said primary display area, and

received information corresponding to said video program is stored <u>where the video program stored corresponds from</u> ~~during part of~~ the period when said interactive application and said second interactive application is being

used after said override command is performed until said interactive applications is terminated, and

playing back said stored information in said primary area, when said interactive applications ~~is~~ are terminated, as to drop at least one frame of video from said stored information until said video program can be presented in real time only when the operation of said interactive application lasts longer than the period of time corresponding to said beginning of said commercial break and the end of said commercial break.

2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein the break detection module is further adapted to generate a break end signal either automatically upon detecting or determining the end of a television commercial break or manually upon a viewer's election, wherein the switching module switches the primary display image back to the video program signal upon receiving the break end signal so that the video program signal is presented in the primary display area.

3. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein the video program module is a television receiver, a satellite receiver, a VCR, or an HDD receiver.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the interactive application program is a video game program, a word processor program, a spreadsheet program, or an internet browser program.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the input module is a keyboard, mouse, or hand-held controller.

6. (Previously presented) The system of claim 2 wherein the interactive application module comprises: a program memory for storing the interactive application program; a central processing unit which executes the interactive application program in accordance to the user input commands; an input

command interface for receiving the user input commands from the input module and transferring the user input commands to the central processing unit; said memory for storing a user's point of progress in executing the interactive application program; a data output means for outputting image and sound data in accordance with the execution of the interactive application program.

7. (Previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein a user's point of progress in executing the interactive application program is automatically stored in the memory when the switching module switches the primary display image to the television program signal, wherein execution of the interactive application program is resumed from the user's stored point of progress in the memory when the switching module switches the primary display image back to the interactive application output data.

8. (Original) The system of claim 6 wherein the input command interface is an infrared photosensor and the input module is one or more hand held remote controllers which emit infrared signals.

9. (Original) The system of claim 6 wherein the program memory is a CD-ROM, magnetic disc, integrated circuit, or hard drive.

10. (Original) The system of claim 6 wherein the program memory is a local memory connected to a remote program source that stores a multitude of interactive application programs, wherein the system comprises means to download interactive application programs from the remote program source to the local memory.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10 wherein the means to download is connected to the internet.

12. (Original) The system of claim 10 wherein the selection and downloading of specific interactive application programs from the remote program source to

the internal memory device is controlled by the input commands entered by the user via the input module.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 further comprising means to deactivate the switching module and to manually select either the video program signal or the interactive application output data as the primary display image.

14. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the display module is a television or a computer monitor having a display screen.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14 wherein the primary display area can be the entire display screen of the television or computer monitor or can be an area constituting a majority of the display screen in televisions and computer monitors with picture-in-picture capabilities.

16. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the display module is a television or computer monitor with picture-in-picture capability having a secondary display area for displaying a secondary display image in addition to the primary display area for presenting the primary display image, wherein the switching module switches the displays of the primary display image and the secondary display image between the television program signal and the interactive application output data so that the television program is presented as the primary display image and the interactive application is displayed as the secondary display image until the beginning of a commercial break is detected, whereupon the detection of the beginning of a commercial break the interactive application output data is presented as the primary display image and the television program signal is displayed as the secondary display image until the end of the commercial break is detected, whereupon the detection of the end of the commercial break the television program signal is presented as the primary display image and the interactive application output data is displayed as the secondary display image.

17. (Currently amended) A method of executing an interactive application program during a commercial break comprising the steps of:
providing a video program module which generates a video program signal;
providing an interactive application module adapted to receive user input commands and generate output data according to an interactive application program;
detecting a commercial break in the video program signal;
presenting the video program in a primary display area of a display until the beginning of the commercial break is detected;
displaying the interactive application in the primary display area until the end of said commercial break, where said video program is automatically resumed to be displayed in said primary display area, except when said user enters in an override command at the time of said commercial break whereby said interactive application is displayed in the primary display area until said interactive application is terminated, wherein

received information corresponding to said video program is stored where the video program being stored corresponds starts from ~~during part of~~ the period when said interactive application is being used after said override command and said storing ends when said interactive application is terminated, and

playing back said stored information in said primary area, when said interactive application is terminated, as to drop at least one frame of video from said stored information until said video program can be presented in real time.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the interactive application module comprises: a program memory for storing the interactive application program; a central processing unit which executes the interactive application program in accordance to the user input commands; an input command interface for receiving the user input commands from an input module and transferring the user input commands to the central processing

unit; a memory for storing a user's point of progress in executing the interactive application program; a data output means for outputting image and sound data in accordance with the execution of the interactive application program.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of automatically storing a user's point of progress in executing the interactive application program in the memory when the television program is presented in the primary display area, wherein execution of the interactive application program is resumed from the user's stored point of progress in the pause memory when the interactive application is presented in the primary display area.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein interactive application programs are downloaded to and stored locally in the program memory.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the display is a television or computer monitor with picture-in-picture capabilities having a secondary display area in addition to a primary display area, wherein the television program is presented in the primary display area and the interactive application displayed in the secondary display area until a commercial break is detected, whereupon detection of the beginning of a commercial break the interactive application is presented in the primary display area and the television program is displayed in the secondary display area until the end of the commercial break is detected, whereupon detection of the end of the commercial break the television program is presented in the primary display area and the interactive application is displayed in the secondary display area.